LETTER

FROM A

GENTLEMAN

In the CITY,

TO A

GENTLEMAN

In the COUNTRY.

ABOUT THE

Odiousness of PERSECUTION.

WHEREIN

The Rise and End of the Penal Laws for Religion in this Kingdom, are consider'd.

It is the Part of the Christian *Religion to Suffer, and not to make People Suffer for Religion,* Tertul. Apol.

EDINBURGH,
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THE LETTER

SIR,

WELL did that Person consider the Creature *Man*, who distinguished him into two parts, *viz. the Man and the Beast:* But it were happy for Mankind, if the *Beast* were less imperious and cruel: In truth, it is rare to find where the *Man* is allowed to have any power in Acting; everything seems too much to be governed by *the Beast*, and by the Tyranny of its inordinate Passions and Senses.

And yet where shall one find a single Person in the World, who calls himself a *Christian*, or that Party of Men who desire to be esteemed *Christians*, but he and they will readily grant that Principle, Mat. 7. 12. *All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets*? and that other Principle, Rom. 3. 8. *Let us not do Evil that Good may come*, to be Gospel-Principles, and obliging to all Mankind?

There is not a Politician or States man, nor a Government any where, that owns *Christianity* to be the true Religion, but confesseth, That in the Council of the *Jews*, which was assembled in order to the Persecuting of the Apostles for matters of meer Religion, *Gamaliel* advised prudently, and according to the Principles of true Religion, *Acts* 5. *Let them alone, for if this Counsel or this work be of Men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, we cannot overthrow it, least happily we be found even to Fight against GOD.* They will all confess readily, when pressed with these charitable and peaceable Principles; that the Spirit of Persecuting for meer Religion, is a Spirit of Injustice, as not doing unto others as our selves would be done unto; and a Spirit of Diffidence and Incredulity, refusing to trust God, and his Providence, with the Defence and Justification of what is Professed to be of God: And yet it is hard to find that single Person, and much more to name, that Community or Government amongst *Christians*, now in being, whose practice,

when they have opportunity and power, are not contrary to their Principles. And not only so, but they will take upon them to justifie such practices to be consistent with, nay, even duties, unto which they are obliged by that pure Religion, which they take upon them to profess to the whole World.

But to the end I may not be esteemed presumptuous, or uncharitable in what I here assert, and in regard it is impossible to produce evident proofs for what I say, as touching single Persons; let us a little examine the matter, as to Parties and Governments, taking this for granted, that every particular Party calls it self a true Church, or the true Church of *Christ*. If what is here urged of differing Churches shall be proved true, the presumption will stand very strong as to single Persons; there being no single person, who would be esteemed a *Christian*, but he is in communion or fellowship with some Church, which he owns to be the true Church of *Christ*, and by whose Judgment he is willing to be concluded, as being a professed Member of it; and as taking it for his Principle, that every Member of the true Church of *Christ* ought to be of her Judgment, because the Scripture says, *She is the Pillar and ground of Truth*: And though some boggle at this, yet nothing is truer than that every *Christian* Society daily practiseth it.

Now, the better to prepare the way for this intended Tryal, we will crave the Liberty first, to consider *Christianity* in the World in general, in its first Ages, when it was under Persecution for meer matter of Religion; and before it gained any civil Power and Dominion; From them we shall know what the true *Christianity* did teach: We will then consider *Christianity* in *England*, when divided only into two distinct Parties, *viz.* The *Protestants*, and the *Papists*: And in the last place, we will consider *Christianity* in *England*, when the *Protestants* were subdivided into several Parties, *viz.* The *Episcopal*, or Church of *England Protestants*, the *Presbyterians*, the *Independants*, the *Anabaptists*, and the *Quakers*: and when the *Papists* were become so small, that they were upon the matter inconsiderable, and I suppose, from these differing times, we may hope for a reasonable Information.

First then, Suppose the question put to the *Christians* of the first and Primitive Times, in those first and greatest Persecutions under which Christianity then suffered *Is it lawful to Persecute*

ſecute, and to make and Execute Laws for the Inflicting of Paine and Penalties upon quiet and peaceable People, for Matters meerly of Religion; and in particular, *For meeting together meerly for matter of Religion*? Doubtleſs, their Anſwer would have been given with one general Voice: *That it was not Lawful*; and that it was againſt the Rule of *Chriſt*, and the Law of Nature, *Quod Tibi non vis fieri, Alteri non feceris, Do not unto another, what thou wouldſt not have done unto thy ſelf*. And that true it is, the *Jews*, who Perſecuted the Lord of Life, and put him to Death for matter of meer Religion, did alledge for their Juſtification, *That they had a Law, and that by their Law he ought to dye*: But that that Law, and all Laws of that Nature, were againſt the Law of GOD: And that the *Chriſtians had no ſuch cuſtom, nor the Churches of Chriſt*, is I think, a moſt undenyable thing.

Theſe Ages (by the Agreement of all) were eſteemed the pureſt Ages of Chriſtianity; Religion being then moſt pure, when the Profeſſors of it were moſt Poor. And if any one ſhal conceive, that the *Chriſtians* in thoſe Ages would have given any other Anſwer, contrary to what I have here framed for them, and ſhall give a convincing Reaſon for ſuch his Apprehenſion, I ſhall confeſs my miſtake. In the mean time I muſt ſay, That I cannot ſee what other anſwer they could have given but what muſt have juſtified the Perſecutions againſt themſelves to have been innocent, on the part of the Perſecutors, who believed thoſe firſt *Chriſtians* to err in Religion, and to be Diſturbers of the Peace, and Government of their Countries, and their Meetings to be unlawfull Aſſemblies: And much more Innocent on the part of the inferiour Magiſtrates, who took care to put thoſe Laws in Execution; they being as much obliged in all civil Reſpects, to put in Execution the Laws of their Superiours, as our inferiour Magiſtrates are obliged to the Execution of our Laws; and they gave the ſame Reaſons. And the ſame is to be ſaid in the caſe of the Perſecution of our Lord Chriſt, as ſeems very clear from that Prayer, which he offered for his Perſecutors: *Father, forgive them, they know not what they do*; here then is a Principle of Chriſtianity undivided.

In the next place, We are to conſider Chriſtianity in *England*, when divided only into two diſtinct parties, *viz.* *Proteſtants* and *Papiſts*, and when the *Proteſtants* had made a Sub-

diviſion

diviſion amongſt themſelves here. This I take to be in the times of K: *Hen.* 8. K. *Edw.* 6. Q. *Mary*, and part of the Reign of Q. *Elizabeth*; for though there were diverſities of Opinions amongſt *Proteſtants*, as well here as in other Countries, even in the firſt beginnings; yet they were not divided into Parties, being every-where upon the Defenſive. In the time of K. *Hen.* 8. which I intend to inſtance in, both Parties were perſecuted.

The Caſe ſtands thus: That King at his coming to the Crown, found the whole Nation in a quiet poſſeſſion of Popery, and holding it as an Article of their Faith, and the Principle whereon they believed the Unity of their Faith depended, that, *The Pope was the Supream Paſtor, and viſible Head of Government next under Chriſt, of the Catholick Church of Chriſt, of which the then National-Church of* England *was a Member*: The King had defended this Artickle by Writing ſo rigourouſly againſt *M. Luther*, that the Pope had for that very work conferred upon him the Title of *Defender of the Faith*, to be enjoyed and uſed by him, and his Succeſſors for ever. After this, by *Act of Parliament*, this Supream Paſtor, this Viſible Head was throwen off, and this King put in his place, ſo far as concerned the Church of *England*, by the Title of *Supream Head of the Church of England*, annexed to the Crown; and this by a Law, 26. *Hen.* 8. C. 1. And then by another Law, 26. *Hen.* 8. C. 13. it was Enacted, *That if any by Word or Writing, ſhould attempt to Deprive the King of the Title of His Royal Eſtate, he ſhould be adjudged a Traytor*: This change of the Headſhip of the Church, was, and is truly (at leaſt in *England*) a *Proteſtant* Doctrine, and undoubtedly there is no *Proteſtant* whatſoever, but approves the caſting off the *Popes* Headſhip, as conformable with the Doctrine of *Proteſtants*. And upon the latter of theſe two Laws, divers ſuffered Death for their denying the Kings Supremacy. This is the firſt ſtep made in *England*, from *Popery* towards *Proteſtancy*.

And the Vigorous Execution of this latter Law, encouraged ſeveral *Proteſtants* from Forreign parts to come into *England*, not doubting but to have a Liberty to Exerciſe their Religion here; and it gave confidence to many of the Subjects of *England* to receive, and to others, to entertain good thoughts of *Proteſtancy*; being perſwaded, that after the ſhedding of ſo much

Blood

Blood, as had been ſhed here upon that Occaſion, *England* would never any more admit of the Article of the Popes Supremacy, and conſequently, would every day make greater ſteps from that Church, of which the Pope was owned to be the Supream Paſtor.

And certain it is, that *Proteſtancy* upon this Occaſion alſo made its entrance into *England*, and gained Ground here, and ſuch (if not by open application to the King for that purpoſe,) yet at leaſt in their Hearts deſired a Toleration, and to be admitted to Preach, and Exerciſe their Religion here, without being Perſecuted for their ſo doing; ſo that their Principle was at that time (at leaſt) againſt Perſecution for meer Religion. But *Proteſtancy* being now taken notice of to grow, another Law was made, 31. *Hen.* 8. for ſetling unity of Opinion in the ſix Articles therein named, by which the denyal of Tranſubſtantiation, and ſeveral other Doctrines therein named, and Enacted to be puniſhed with Death.

And now Perſecution in *England*, for matters of meer Religion, grew ſharp and high; ſo that it is obſerved by our Hiſtorians, that upon one and the ſame day, ſome who were Profeſſed *Papiſts*, were put to Death for denying the Kings Supremacy which was a *Proteſtant* Article: And ſome who were profeſſed *Proteſtants*, were put to death for denying Tranſubſtantiation, which was an Article of the *Papiſts*: So that at this time, the Government could neither be ſaid to be *Popiſh*, nor *Proteſtant*, but both Parties were Perſecuted moſt ſeverly for matters of meer Religion: And he who ſhould then have ſaid to either Party, in juſtification of the Proceedings of the Magiſtrate in the Execution of either of thoſe Laws, That that Party did not then ſuffer for any matter of meer Religion, but for breaking of the Peace, in breaking of the King's Laws, would certainly have been taken not to have underſtood thoſe Laws, or the cauſe of their then Suffering.

And now, ſuppoſe each of theſe Parties ſeparately interrogated, when thus under Perſecution (for *afflictio dat intellectum*) Is it lawful to Perſecute, and to make and Execute Laws, for the Inflicting of Pains and Penalties upon quiet and peaceable People, for matters of *meer Religion*? (for it ſeemed a time to teach both Parties an Eternal temperance and moderation) moſt certainly, each Party in the

their then present Circumstances, would have answered in the Negative, That it was not lawful: They would not have fallen into the debate to consider what Religion their Persecutors were of, whether of the *Popish* or *Protestant*, to the end, to have fixt the cruelty and Injustice of persecuting for a matter of meer Religion, upon that Party, as a Principle of their Religion, which their Fancies should have perswaded them to have been the Religion of their Persecutors.

The *Papists* would not have then stood formalizing that, because the first Persecution was occasioned upon the denyal of the King's Headship over the Church of *England*, which was a *Protestant* Doctrine; in opposition to the Pope's Headship, which was the *Popish* Doctrine; therefore the *Protestants* were the Aggressors in the Persecution; and therefore the Principle of Persecution was a *Protestant* Principle; and the Persecution of the *Protestants* afterwards, was no other then a just Judgement of God drawn upon the *Protestants* by themselves, as a Consequence of that Principle of Persecution, which gave them the first occasion of introducing their Religion nationally into *England*. Nor would the *Protestants*, by way of Recrimination have charged the *Papists* then, that because that King and the then Government were of the *popish* Religion in every point, save only in the Article touching the Supremacy; therefore the principal of the persecution must necessarily be a *Popish* principle: No, they would most certainly, each party, have disclaimed the principle, as unwarranted by the principles of true *Christianity*, which each of them claimed to be theirs, and each of them would have agreed, that it was their common principle, To do unto others as they desired others should do unto them. Here we see the principles of *Christianity* in *England*, when divided.

The persecutions before mentioned, being quieted by the Death of K. *Henry* the Eighth, and the Crown descending unto K. *Edward* the Sixth, an Infant of such tender Years, as made him uncapable of Exercising the Government in his own person, not being come to the use of right Reason; the Duke of *Somerset* took upon him the Administration of all things, under the Title of *Protector*, and with him the *Protestants* party had their sole Interest.

Several Penal Laws were made in this Kings Reign, for the In-

inflicting Pains and Penalties for matters of meer Religion; which gave occasion to the *Papists* to charge upon *Protestants* the Principle of Persecution for matters of meer Religion, as their Principle. It is true, the *Papists* were at that time Sufferers, and were actually Persecuted by the then Government for matters of meer Religion: But true Charity might easily have found other Reasons, unto which those Persecutions might warrantably have been Assigned; and there was certainly no necessity of Assigning them to any Principle of the *Protestants*.

The first Law which was made, relating to these matters, was 1. *Edw.* 6. C. 1. touching the Lord's Supper, Entituled, *The Penalties for speaking against the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, or against the receiving thereof in both kinds.* This seems to have no other tendency than bareley to keep both Parties from falling together by the Ears, and the *Protestants* were more likely to fall under the Punishment of this Law, than the *Papists*: None could say, That it was the effect of Intemperate Spirits; for though it directed Communion in both kinds, to such as desired to Communicate; yet it compelled not any person to communicate. And it had a Clause of great Temperance in the very close of it, in these words; *Not condemning hereby the usage of any Church out of the King's Majesties Dominions.*

The next Law of this Nature, was made in the same Parliament, *viz.* 1 *Edw.* 6. C. 12. it is Entituled thus, *viz. Statutes concerning Treasons*, &c. *repealed:* and this cannot be denyed to be sharp against the *Papists*. It makes it highly Penal to affirm, *That the King is not, or ought not to be Supream Head on Earth of the Church of* England *and* Ireland, *or any of them immediately under God, or that the Bishop of* Rome, *or any other Person or Persons, other than the* King *of* England *for the time being, is, or ought to be, by the Laws of God, Supream Head of the same Churches, or any of them:* But there is no necessity or reason of ascribing this neither to any *Protestant* Principle, though it is supposed to be made in affirmance of a *Protestant* Principle.

Another penal Law was made 1, and 3. *Edw.* 6. Entituled, *The Penalty for not using Uniformity of Service and Administration of Sacraments.* And in 3. and 4. *Edw.* 6. C. 10. was made

an Act, *For the abolishing and putting away of divers Books and Images*; Both which were severe against the *Papists* in matters of meer Religion; yet do I not find any necessity, why the Persecutions, which these Statutes occasioned, should be imputed to any *Protestant* Principle.

During the whole Reign of this Infant King, it is clear, that the *Papists* in some degree suffered Persecution from the Hands of the *Protestants*, for matters of meer Religion: And without doubt, had it been then demanded of the *Papists*, *Whether such Persecutions and such Laws Enacting such persecutions, were Lawful, and agreeable with the principles of true* Christianity, *which they pretended to maintain*? their Answer would have been in the *Negative*: And they would then with one accord have readily agreed, *That persecution for matters of meer Religion, was no more consistant with the Rule of Christ, requiring us, To do unto others, as we would that others should do unto us, than Murder and Robbery.*

But the persecutions Inflicted upon the *Papists*, by the Law made in the time of King *Edward* the Sixth, did not last long; they ended with his Life; and by the descending of the Crown to Queen *Mary*, the *Papists* were rescued from all their Sufferings. All the Laws made against them in the Times of *Hen.* 8 and *Edw.* 6. were Repealed. But the case was altered with the poor *Protestants*, whose Sufferings were so great, and are so sharply and justly reflected on, even to this day, that I, who love not to aggravate any thing, especially that carries its own aggravation with it, will say no more of them, but beg of our good GOD, to fill us with mercy in place of revenge, and to forgive them as we would be forgiven. Sure I am, had any *Protestant* been asked his Judgment in that Age, touching the principle of persecuting for matters of meer Religion, he would have disclaimed it, as absolutely contrary to the Principles of his Religion, which is the point that I am labouring to Evince. And after all this, shall any one take it ill, if upon a Principle of Charity I shall profess, that I could never as yet see any thing offered, which in my poor apprehension did necessarily Evince; *That Persecution for meer Religion, was even an avowed principle of either side.*

The Bloody Fury of persecution, under which the *Protestants* suffered so miserably in Q. *Maries* time, did end with her

Reign

Reign, which was but short. And after that, the *Protestants* never suffered more from the *Papists*. But upon the death of Q. *Mary*, the Crown coming to Q. *Elizabeth*; and she thereupon declaring her self a firm, a zealous, and to all intents, religiously a *Protestant*, the Edge was turned against the *Papists*, before any differences were discerned to be among the *Protestants*. Several of the Popish Clergy suffered persecution, some even unto Death in several parts of the Kingdom: And new Laws were from time to time framed and multiplyed for those purposes. And if now we ask the Opinion of the *Papists*, as to Penal Laws, either Sanguinary or others, and persecutions, for meer matter of Religion; they will tell you, (and they continue in that protestation even unto this day) *That all such Laws and persecutions are unlawful, and against the Principles of the Gospel.* And though the *Protestants* under several changes, have been in the possession of those Laws, and have at times more or less Executed them; yet (so far as I can find) they do not own persecution for matters meerly of Religion to be their Principle, or so much as lawful.

After the *Papists* had some time continued the alone-Persecuted party for Matters of Religion, several Differences, in matters meerly of Religion, happened to divide the *Protestants* into distinct and separate Parties, during some part of the Reign of *Queen Elizabeth*; and also during the several and successive Reigns of King *James*, and King *Charles* the First: And about the beginning of the Reign of King *James*, some few desperate Male-contents, professedly of the Popish Religion, being found Guilty of a wicked Plot, whereby they had designed the Destruction both of that King, and of his Parliament, by Gun-Powder (for which they were deservedly Executed) several new and more severe Laws were then, and at several times after, made against the *Papists* in general, by which several Punishments were Inflicted on them for Matters of meer Religion; and several Penal Laws were also made, by which the then Governing *Protestant* party, (then, and still distinguished by the Name of the *Church of England*, or the *Episcopal party*) persecuted them.

The Dissenting *Protestants* of all sorts were prosecuted under the general Name of *Non-conformists*, who cryed aloud for *Liberty of Conscience*, and declared it absolutely Unlawful to

punish any, for Matters of meer Religion: The refusal of which, bred bad blood in the Kingdom, and we all know what followed.

During the continuance of the War, and after King *Charles* the First was not able to make Head against the *Non-conformists*, the *Non-conformists* Retaliated the Church of *England*, and not a little crusht the *Popish* party, both having engaged on t'other side, and being of other Religions, esteemed themselves persecuted for matter of Religion.

That War being ended with the Death of King *Charles* the First, and the expelling of our late King out of his Dominions, and the Ruine of *Episcopacy*, and the Suppression of the *Papists*, and the total change of the Government; the *Non-conformists* under the several Forms, took upon them and kept the Government, until the late King was by the Divine Hand of Providence restored to his Crown: During all which time, the *Episcopal* party and the *Papists* Suffered, more or less, for matters (at least in their Apprehension) meerly of Religion. But these two parties were not alone in their Sufferings, for during those Bloody contests, there appeared another Party, which from its very first rise in this Kingdom, hath been severely persecuted, and that only for Matters of Religion. This party was the People called *Quakers*. They did at their first shewing themselves in the World, go under the name of the *Children of Light*, because they assert, as their main and first principle, *That* Christ *is the True Light, that Enlightens every Man and Woman with a measure of saving Light; which all ought to obey on pain of Damnation*; but by one *Bennit*, an Officer, in 1650. were nick-named *Quakers*. They professed themselves to adhere to the plain principles of the first *Christians*, and particularly to hold it as their principle, *That all persecution whatsoever, against any party; people or person whatsoever, for matters meetly of Religion, is absolutely Unlawful, Unrighteous, and against the Spirit and Will of God, and Doctrine of true Christianity.* And to give them their due, they have been true contenders for their Principle, both by their frequent Apologies and Remonstrances on the one hand, and Invincible patience in Suffering on the other hand.

Upon the Restauration of the King, the *Episcopal* party was also Restored. The *Presbyterians*, *Independants* and *Anabaptists*,

Papists, expected a general Toleration in matters of Religion, according to some of the King's Gracious Letters, as a Reward for their helping or not opposing His Restauration. The *Papists* also expected the same thing, as a reward for their Loyalty in adhering to the Crown. The *Quakers*, now a great People; grew confident of the like Freedom, because of their Inoffensiveness to Government. But instead of this expected Liberty; all the formal Penal Laws made in the time of Q. *Elizabeth*, K. *James*, and K. *Charles* the First, were Revived, and ordered to be put in Execution, as well against all *Nonconformists*, who were *Protestants*, as against the *Papists*. And new and more severe Laws were made against them all: And by these respective Practice we see, what all these parties have done when they had power.

I think such as understand the Transactions of our Country, will clear me from having made any mistake as to matters of Fact, in any thing that I have here said, touching past Persecutions; though I believe there will not want some, who will either think me mistaken in the point of Charity, when I profess to believe that I do not think there is any one party now in *England*, who holds it as a principle of their Religion, *That it is Lawful to Persecute*, or to make or Execute Laws for the Inflicting of pains and penalties for any matter of meer Religion: Or else they will suspect, I do not in Truth believe what I here profess to believe in this point, since even what I have said as to matters of Fact before urged by my self; it plainly appears, that there is not one party now in *England* (the people called *Quakers* only excepted) who profess themselves *Christians*, but have been notoriously Guilty (more or less) of the very Fact, or (at least) of a publick allowing, if not abetting of it: And every party will be apt to censure me of Singularity (at least,) since each party thinks that they have Arguments drawn from Facts, sufficient to fix this ugly Doctrine, as a principle, upon that Religion which they hate most. O that the *Man* could prevail against the *Beast*! and that we would permit our passions to give way to our Reason, to consider things nakedly. and as they truly are, *Si satis est accusasse, Quis erit Innocens*? If to accuse be a sufficient conviction, what party shall be able to clear it self? And who knows not, that 'tis a *Christians* part to Suffer, but never to Persecute.

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I very well know, That the *Protestants* in general, who look upon the *Papists* as their common Enemies, do in their Pulpitts, in their Writings, and in all their Addresses to the people, charge them with those Rivers of blood which streamed in the times of Q. *Mary*, and with the bloody Intentions which those ill Men had in their Hearts, who were engaged in the wicked powder-plot: That the first was done by Authority, and chiefly by the *Papish* Bishops: That the other, though the Fact but of private persons, was never condemned by Authority; and Silence is an implyed consent and approbation. Do we well consider, what the *Papists* offer by way of Extenuation in answer to these charges? they justifie none of these Facts: But as to the first, they recommend to us to be considered, the circumstances that Q. *Mary* was in, when she came to the Crown. All the chief Heads of the *Protestant* party, had set up and proclaimed the Lady *Jane* duely Queen in opposition to Q. *Mary*; their Lawful Soveraign. They had raised an Army against her: She was compelled to gain her Right by Force: She was a Conqueror: And if we will believe them, she had not given any Articles, which might have obliged her to pardon any who were guilty of this Usurpation, and Treason: She was told, It was a confederacy of the whole party of the *Protestants*, which gave her a ground to suspect, that the *Protestants* held it for a principle, That it was lawful for them to take up Arms against, and Depose their Lawful Soveraign, if of a Religion contrary to him.

She might, by the Laws then in being, (the same which we have to this day in force amongst us) have taken away the Lives of all who were any ways Guilty of endeavouring to Depose her: She did not make any one new persecuting Law (which is considerable) by which any of those were taken or who were put to Death. But being put into fears by her Council; that without making great Examples of Justice in all parts of the Kingdom, she would be in danger of having new Insurrections made by the *Protestants* against her: she was perswaded that the only way to prevent the sheding of more blood for the Future, was to punish considerable numbers of those who had then actually broken the old Laws of her Kingdom. Her Bishops (and that is the chief and justest ground of the charge) had their Fears and Revenge also, in particular

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they were newly restored to their Bishopricks, and Religion, of which they had been dispossessed in the Time of King Edward the Sixth; They were afraid of being again disturbed; and these fears and passions made them take wrong measures. They perswaded the Queen, that she might as well make Examples of Justice, and prevent future Insurrections, by punishing those for their Religion, who had been Guilty of Treason, as if she had punished them for Treason: And they urged, that by this way she should do her self the greater right: and give a proof to the World, that she was more offended with Treason committed against Heaven, (for so they esteemed *Protestant* Religion) than with Treason committed against her self, which might be interpreted Revenge. They had forgotten the principles of the true *Christian* Religion, which required to leave unto God to Revenge whatsoever Injuries are done to him, and to leave it to God to judge, what Injuries were done to him; *They did not now think of doing unto others as they would that others should do unto them:* They did not remember the wise advice of *Gamaliel*, before mention'd, but giving Ear only to their own Fears, and preferring Humane Policies before Gospel-Rules, they misled the Queen, and took away the Lives of vast numbers of such, against whom nothing could be charged, but what was matter of meer Religion; thereby giving a Just occasion to charge upon their own Religion the Principle of *Persecution* for meer Religion, which those who now profess that Religion here, do pretend to disown and abominate.

And as to the business of the *Powder plot*, they pray us to observe, that it was the Treason, not of the *Papists* of *England*, but of a few, particular persons of Desperate Fortunes and worse consciences, and not without suspition of being drawn into the Snare by their Enemies: That upon the most severe Scrutiny which could be made into that business, it clearly appear'd, that the number of the Offenders was not greater than what happens sometimes to be engaged in a particular Burglary, and not so many as make up the fourth part of a Foot company of Souldiers: That the Villany of that design hath been as fully and generally, yea, and as publickly decry'd, condemn'd and reprobated by the whole party of *English papists* of that Age, and of all succeeding Ages; as any thing

thing can be by a party in perſecution, who have not ever had any opportunities or allowances to act in any caſe otherwiſe then each perſon of the party only in his private Capacity might do: and they Appeal to the Juſtice of thoſe who profeſs to have the greeteſt averſion of all others againſt the Religion of the *papiſts*, whether they will admit it as a rule, that the villanies of ſome private perſons who profeſs themſelves to be in Fellowſhip or Communion with any Church or people, calling themſelves *Chriſtians*, may in Juſtice, and ought in Reaſon to be charged as proceeding from the principles, Doctrines, or Religion of that Church or people with which private perſons profeſs to be in Communion or Fellowſhip! They cry out, God forbid any ſuch Rule ſhould have credit in the World.

On the other ſide, I am not ignorant, that the *Papiſts* who Eſteem the *Proteſtants* in general as their mortal Enemies, by whom they apprehend themſelves to have been deprived of what is moſt dear unto them, from the time that the *Proteſtant* Religion firſt gain'd a Preheminency in *England*, are as highly Uncharitable towards the *Proteſtants*, as theſe are ſevere in their cenſures towards them. They have almoſt look'd upon the *Proteſtants*, as the *Iſraelites* did upon the *Egyptians*; They charged upon them the guilt of all blood that hath been ſhed, of all the perſecutions which have hap'ned for matters of meer Religion, ſince the firſt Act of *Parliament* of that nature, made by King *Henry* the VIII unto this hour: Inſinuating, that what was ſo Cruelly Acted by Q. *Mary's* Biſhops, was occaſion'd by the provocations given in the time of King *Edward* the VI. and warranted (as far as ill Acts can be warranted, Firſt, by the *Non conformiſts* Retaliations towards the Church of *England*, when ſubdu'd by them upon the Death of King *Charles* the I. and then by the Retaliation made to the *Non conformiſts* by thoſe of the Church of *England* ſince the Reſtoration of our preſent Soveraign.

In ſhort, as the *proteſtants* in general, to excuſe and juſtifie themſelves, labour to caſt *perſecutions* for matters of meer Religion upon the *papiſts*, as a principle of *popery*; ſo the *papiſts* are as Induſtrious to perſwade the World, that it is a principle of *proteſtancy*.

I might here by way of Apology and Extenuation refer the

papiſts

Papists, as they do the *Protestants*, to consider of Circumstances of times and things which occasion'd their Severities against them, as the unruliness which might probably be amongst the people in the time of K. *Edw.* the VI. to see their Religion alter'd as they conceiv'd, by the *Protector*. And in Q. *Elizabeth*'s time, besides the resentment which the *Protestants* had of the Cruelties which were exercis'd against them in Q. *Mary*'s time, It is certain, the *Papists* did not look upon Q. *Elizabeth* to have any Right to the Crown; she having been declar'd by the Judicial Sentence, and Judgement of Arch-Bishop *Cranmer* to be Illegitimate; and the Marriage between K. *Henry* VIII. and *Anne* of *Bullen* her Mother, being by the same Sentence declar'd absolutely void *ab Initio*, and that Sentence confirm'd by Act of *Parliament*, 28 *Hen.* 8. c. 7. So that the *Papists* took Q. *Mary* of *Scotland* to be the Rightful Heir to the Crown, and Rightful Queen, and Q. *Elizabeth* was constrain'd by great necessity to keep them under; but Apologies are not proper to be made on the behalf of those, who have the Authority towards those who are subjected.

And as the *Protestants* in general, and the *Papists*, reproach'd each other, reciprocally charging upon each other, that *persecution* for matters of meer *Religion* was a Principle of each others *Religion*; so did the *Episcopal Protestants*, and the *Non-conformists*: The *Episcopal Party*, who first *persecuted* the *Non-conformists* under the general Name of *Puritans*, or *Presbyterians*, affirm'd, *That their first beginners in Scotland, from whence they deriv'd themselves, did more than any Party upon Earth Persecute others for matters of meer Religion, and had gain'd a Power by their Usurpation, Oppression and Persecution, being a sort of people who wanted the very Essentials (as they said) of Religion, viz. A Right Ordination, without which (as they alleadged) there could be no True Church, no True Ministery, or True Sacraments: And that, therefore they ought by Penal Laws, timely made, to be prevented for making Disturbances in England.* The *Puritans* to justify themselves, denying *Persecution* for matters of meer *Religion* to be their Principle, or to be lawful, labour'd to fix it upon the Church of *England* as their Principle, and as taken up by them from the *Papists*. And as to the particulars charg'd upon those of *Scotland*, they

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said, That whatsoever those of the Reformation had done in Scotland, was approv'd and abetted by Queen Elizabeth and the Protestants of England, without whose Advice nothing in Scotland had been Transacted, and without whose Assistance things had not been so Effected: They further said, as to the point of Ordination, That the Church of England ought not in Reason, to accounts Episcopal Ordination to be such an Essential of Religion as they charged, for that if no Ordination could be valid but by Bishops, that then it would follow, that no Ordination could be valid but from True and Rightful Bishops of the True Church of Christ; and then the Ordination of the Church of England would be as invalid as the Ordination of those of Scotland; for the Church of England could make out no Succession of Bishops but through the Popish Church, which both parties (as well those of the Church of England, as those of Scotland) had condemned and agreed to be a False Church, and no True Church of Christ, but an Harlot and Anti-christian.

Thus the Episcopal protestants and the Puritans charged and recriminated each other; the Episcopal Party never the less making good their ground, so long as they had the Civil power to support them; but when upon the Death of K. Charles the I. the Non-conformists gain'd the Civil Power into their Hands, the church of England party (like all Parties oppress'd) being under Persecution, together with the Papists for matters of meer Religion, Did absolutely condemn all such Persecutions as Unlawful. And then the Non-conformists (who were at that time sub-divided, and branch'd out into several other Parties) gave occasion to charge them with the principle of Persecution for meer Religion, and put them to use the same Arguments to clear themselves, as the Episcopal party and Papists had respectively before made use of, when the Government was in them, to prevail with the World to believe that they abhorr'd the Principle of Persecution for meer Religion; and that the Persecutions us'd by them, were not for any matters of meer Religion, nor in Truth Persecutions but purely Acts of Prudence, and doing right to themselves by a just care to keep the the Episcopal party and the Papists out of all possibility of persecuting them any more for the future.

But none of them could find any reason of that Nature

excuse the *persecutions*, which they us'd toward the people called *Quakers*, they could not charge them with ever having *persecuted* any Party or Person: Yet in Fact, both the *Non-conformists* and the *Episcopal party* did *Persecute* them in their turns; and therefore to prevent being charged for persecuting a quiet People for matters of meer *Religion*, They pretended sometimes, that the *Quakers* were all *Mad-men*; and that they Imprison'd them only to keep them out of the way, and to preserve them in peace: And those who had gotten the *Government*, would upon that Title claim the right of judging what persons were *Mad*, as they did always of judging what was *Truth* and what *Errour*. At other times they pretended to punish the *Quakers* as Blasphemers, and the Persecutors being the only Judges of what was Blasphemy under their Government, they might make what they pleas'd Blasphemy. When they grew asham'd of this Charge, they then pretended, that the *Quakers* were conceal'd *Papists*; and that every one who spoke or utter'd any thing in their Meetings (whether *Man* or *Woman*) was a *Jesuit* Disguised. It was clear, that the *Quakers* suffered highly, and it was as clear, there could not with any shew of Truth be any thing charg'd against them, but what was matter of meer Religion.

Now upon the whole Business, what shall such a person judge of these matters, who esteems himself in danger of being judged by God, if he shall make any rash Judgment? Shall we take for a sufficient solid Proof, the Charge of an Exasperated Enemy, against an Enemy who hath provoked him, and this in a matter of so great a Concernment, as to render not a single Person, but a whole Party unworthy to live? This were to judge against the Rules of common Justice and Righteousness, as well as to *Sin* against Charity. And this way of judging would render each Party (the *Quakers* only excepted) to be Guilty, and to give a just Title to each Party, where it hath the possession of Power and Government to put to Death all of the other Parties.

For though we in *England* should refuse to admit the Charge of the *Papists* here to be a sufficient proof against the *Protestants* in so great a matter; yet let us not deceive our selves so far, as to suppose that in *Popish Countries*, the Charge of *Pa-*

pists against *Protestants* would not be taken to be at the least as valid, as the Charge of *Protestants* will be taken to be against *Papists* here. Shall we go another way, and say, that in regard every Party takes it self to be the only good and true *Christian*, and in regard we see every Party, when in Power, practising this thing, and persecuting the other (when in their Power) for matters of meer Religion, that therefore every Party agrees in this? *That it is Lawful for those who are the true* Christians, *to Make and Execute Penal Laws against such as are Erroneous* Christians, *and to Inflict Pains and Penalties upon them for matters of meer Religion, that is, for Errors held by them as Doctrines of Religion:* But neither will this be reasonable or convenient; for this will also give Title to those who have the *Actual Power*, and are in the possession of each respective Government in the *Christian* World, to put to Death, and destroy all within their respective Jurisdictions, whom they judge to be *Erroneous Christians*: And this will be also to Entitle the Civil Magistrate in every *Christian Countrey*, to the absolute and uncontroulable right of judging between *Truth* and *Error* so as to have an appeal from his Definitive Judgement; and to entail against common Sense an *Infallibility* in the *Civil Magistrate* of every *Countrey* of determining in matters of *Faith* and *Religion*: *I say, against common Sense; for* Christianity *teacheth us, that there can be but one true Faith; and if this Power of judging should be allow'd to the Civil Magistrate*, there would be as many *Faiths* as there are *Governments* amongst *Christians*: That would be true Faith in one Countrey, and the denyal of it punishable with *Death*; which in another Countrey would be an *Error* and a *False Faith*, and and the affirming of it punishable with *Death*.

It would also be to justify not only what the *Papists* in *England*, but what both the *Papists* and *Protestants* in all other parts cast as a Charge upon our *Nation*, *That the only Rule of Faith in* England, *is the* Parliament *of* England; *that nothing is true* Christian Doctrine *in* England, *nor any Translation or Sense, or Interpretation of Scripture, a true Translation or Sense, or Interpretation of Scripture in* England, *but what is judg'd so to be by the* Parliament *of* England. Whereas, though in the Statute made 2, 3 Edw. 6. c. 1 Entituled, *An Act for the Uniformity of Service and Administration of the Sacraments throughout the*

the Realm: It was affirmed by that Parliament, *That the Book of Common-Prayer enjoyn'd by that Statute to be us'd, was made by the Aid of the Holy Ghost*: Yet that very *Book* was by that very *Parliament* alter'd and amended, as appears by Statute 5 *Edw.* 6. C. 1. And it hath received several *Reformations* and *Amendments* since, and was in and by a *Parliament* in Q. *Marys* days, judged to be *Heretical*.

As to my own Judgment in this particular Affair, it leads me to another way of reasoning and discoursing; I do, and I think I am bound in Charity to believe that every Person and Party who professeth *Christianity*, do at least intend to be what they profess, and that they do all in their Hearts fully give consent unto all those common Doctrines of *Christianity*, which, as standing Principles of that pure *Religion*, were never question'd or deny'd by any sort of *Christians*, such as are those which I have before observ'd, *Of doing unto others, as we would have others do unto us, and if not doing Evil, that Good may come of it*; and those others of *Loving our Neighbours as our selves*; *yea, and of Loving our very Enemies, and doing good to them that who hate us and use us despightfully*: All which, when soberly consider'd, without passion or Humane Interest, are expresly against all *persecutions* for matters of meer Religion, and do not only tye up *Protestants* from destroying of *Protestants*, but even from persecuting of any sort for any matters of meer *Religion*: as those Commands, *Thou shalt do no Murther*, *Thou shalt not Steal*, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery*, are against, and tye up all *Christians* from shedding of Blood Unlawfully and Malitiously, and against *Rapine* and *Uncleanness*. And such do also in their Hearts believe, that whatever Counsel or work is of Man, will fall of it self; and that what is of God will stand Maugre all the *Persecutions* and Oppositions of man; and that there is none of them do intend to fight against God, or would willingly be found so doing. All this being taken by me in my own Thoughts, to be most certainly true, when ever I come to enquire, How then can these things be? How can all these parties (among which there are great numbers of Good, Sober, Judicious and Sincere persons) offend against these common principles of the common *Faith* of all *Christians*, by making and Executing *Penal Laws* for matters of

of meer *Religion*; *immediately adjoyning* to this another Question; which is, And how can so many persons, professing to be *Christians*, take revenge by Blood, usurpe the Goods of their Neighbours, and commit the Sin of *Uncleanness*? Yet all these were once done by that great and good King, and Prophet, who was *a Man after God's own Heart*. That which to me Answers this latter Question, seems clearly to solve the former; That the *Beast* gets the better of the *Man*; The *Passions* commit a force upon *Reason*; and Humane Frailty, being too weak, brings the best of men sometimes (though but for a time) and careless men oftentimes to contradict their *Faith* by their *Practice*, until by Afflictions they gain understanding, and come to *Repentance* for the Saving of their Souls. This to me seems so evident a Truth, that, until something more evident shall convince me of my being mistaken in this, I should think it as great a Sin against *Charity*, for me to charge it as a Principle of the Religion of any party (professing to be *Christians*) *That persecution for meer Religion is Lawful*, because I see it practis'd by those who have Power amongst that party, as to charge the same party, to hold it as a Principle of their Religion, that Murther, Theft and Adultery are Lawful, because great numbers of that Party, are too often guilty of the practice of those Sins.

If this way of considering things be not found unreasonable, but upon due reflection, shall appear to be conformable to the true principles of *Christianity*, and the *Holy Rules* and *Doctrines* of Christ, I hope those who are publick persons, will forgive me when I wish they would lay it to their Hearts, and think well, whether it would not be of use to preserve this poor *Nation*, from the further guilt of those additional *Injustices*, and *Cruelties*, which the contrary way of rash Judging must involve, and daily do involve us in.

Is it not more calm Judgment to say, That the *Disordinate Passions* of K. *Henry* the VIII. hurried him into those *Cruelties* which he committed, than to impute them to the principles of any Religion which he profess'd? Is it not more becoming us to say, that an over zealous passion of Fears which our first Reformers had in the time of K. *Edw.* the sixth, made them apprehend, that they could not put *Popery* out of its Possession otherwise than by force, and consequently led them

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unwarily in practices, which were contrary to their *True Faith*, then to admit the Charge laid on them by the then Persecuted *Papists*, *That persecution for meer Religion, was the first* Protestant principle, *upon which* Protestancy *laid its first politick Foundation in* England? Were it not more Ingenious, to attribute the *cruelties*, which were inflicted in *Q. Mary's* time, to the *passion* of *Fear* in that Queen; and of *Fear* and *covetousness* in her *Bishops*, that nothing could secure her against *New Rebellions* from the *Protestants*, nor fix the Bishops in their re-gain'd Possessions, but Examples of the utmost rigour, then to labour to fix those Barbarous Cruelties as a Principle upon the Religion of the Queen? Is it not more Charitable to assign all the harsh Laws made and executed in the times of Queen *Elizabeth*, King *James*, and in the several succeeding times since by the Government avowedly *Protestant*, to the *Fear*, Ambition, Revenge, or other frail Passions, cover'd generally under the specious Titles of *Reasons of State*, then to give the World a just Ground to charge those Cruelties upon a principle of *Protestancy*. This we must do, or (which is as much to our Dishonour) we must give a just Ground to the most Civiliz'd Nations of the World, to charge those past Barbarities, exercis'd so long in *England*, upon the people of our Nation, to the Cruelties of our *English* Natures: For what other thing can Foraign Nations impute it unto, when they shall observe the same Persecution continued for near one hundred and fourty years, under all the various Forms of Religion, which we have had, each party renouncing the cruelties to proceed from any principle of the Religion own'd by that party, yet exercising in Fact, what they renounce to be their Faith.

But my Charity doth not rest here, it compels me to make yet one step further, and since it is not to the dishonour of our Nation, I hope none will be displeased with it. As I am verily perswaded, that all those *Penal Laws*, which have been made in this our Nation, for the inflicting of pains and penalties for matter of meer Religion, have not had their original from any principle of any of those Religions which have been professed by any of those Powers or Governments by which they were made, but ought to be imputed to the passions of those who made, and caus'd them to be put in execution:

And

And that a false Reason in State, or zeal in Church-Men, gave those passions leave to work even against the Religion which every Party persecuting, profess'd; so do I most confidently believe, that the true principles of the common Christianity, which every Party owned, and the true Reason of State grounded upon those true and commonly owned principles, restrained all and every the respective parties, by whom those Laws were made, from all Intentions of having all, or any of those Laws rigidly Executed; so that those who had from time to time, and who still have the Executive and Interpretative power of those laws vested in them, have always understood, and do still continue to understand those Laws not to have been intended by the Legislative power to be *strictly and rigidly* or *constantly executed*: My Reason is, that had this been otherwise, All of All Parties, except one, who at some time had been in Power, must have been e're this totally Butcher'd or destroy'd, and our poor Countrey so far Depopulated as to have become a peey to some of our Potent Neighbours: For even in *Queen Mary's* times, thousands escaped that never fled; and had private Meetings, but the most eminent were cruelly used.

I know some there are who have imputed the remiss Execution of these unkind Laws to the Generous Good Nature which is found in the generality of our Nation, which abhors cruelty, and hath alwayes a compassion for those who are under persecution; and which well appears to any who reflect upon the tenderness of our Courts of Justice, and of the generality both of our Magistrates, and our Juries in all the Countries in *England*, and how they have comforted themselves under the several Circumstances of past Times, when they have been call'd upon, and Provok'd; yea Threatn'd, and endeavour'd to have been forc'd into a Spirit of Persecuting.

Others there are, who have taken the great unwillingness in all sorts of persons to be active in the Execution of these Laws to proceed from the innate zeal that is in every *English* man to preserve the Liberties and Properties of their Fellow Subjects, as well as their own; and that they have observ'd, that Liberty and Property were never any way so much Entrench'd upon, violated and destroyed, as by these Cruel

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Laws of perſecution for meer Religion: So that every man conſidering when he ſees his Neighbour (though differing in Judgement from himſelf) perſecuted and deſtroyed for what ought to be call'd rather his miſtake then his Fault (for no man can believe againſt his Judgement, or take an Oath againſt his Conſcience without ſin) that though this be his Neighbours turn this year, it may be his own turn the next year, or next Reign; and no mans Life, Liberty or property can be ſecure in caſe ſuch Laws be Exe cuted; but only ſuch men, who have a Conſcience fitted fo all Changes of Government, and for every Religion that is up permoſt, and who for that reaſon are as unfit to be Truſted b their Neighbours as by the Government.

But though I take it to be very true that this natural inclination to Mercy and pity, and this real zeal which all men have for the preſerving of Liberty and property, may have been great helps to keep off, or mitigate the ſevere Execution of theſe Laws of perſecution for meer Religion; yet when I well conſider the great power and Influences which the Supreme Authority always hath upon the Subjects; and particularly upon all the Magiſtrates in general, who are always perſons nominated and appointed by the Supreme Authority: and muſt be therefore ſuppos'd to be ſuch in whom the Supreme Anthority alwayes Confides, as to the due Execution of what the Supreme Authority intends to have executed; I think it will Naturally follow, that a forbearance of the rigid execution of theſe Laws, ought to be chiefly imputed to the Religion and true Chriſtian policy of the Supreme Authority; and we ought to believe, that though a falſe Reaſon of State did ſometimes permit Humane Frailty, to make ſuch Laws as were contradictory to the true Laws and principles of that very Religion which thoſe perſons profeſſed, by whom thoſe Laws were made; yet true Religion, and true reaſon of ſtate always kept thoſe perſons from intending to have thoſe Laws rigidly and ſeverely executed.

I will confirm this by one ſingle Inſtance of the higheſt Nature, and that not in the beſt of times.

The laſt *popiſh prieſt* that was put to Death in *England* for being a *prieſt* of the *Romiſh Church*, was put to Death in the time of *Cromwel*; I ſuppoſe, we are not to doubt of the paſſionate heat which inflam'd thoſe who were then in Authority againſt the *papiſts* and *popery*; they look'd on the *papiſts* as mortal Enemies to their Government, and as faſt Friends, and devoted Servants to the Crown and Royal Family: Notwithſtanding which, when

The said *priest* came upon his Tryal at the *Sessions-house* in the *Old-Baily* in *London*, and upon his Arraignment, pleaded that he was not Guilty of Treason, but acknowledg'd himself to be a *priest* of the *Roman church*: It clearly appear'd, that those who were his Judges, did their utmost to preserve his Life, and to prevent the execution against him of those Laws upon which he stood Indicted: For they did for many hours suspend the Recording of his Confession, making it their endeavour to prevail with him to plead not Guilty to the Indictment: They pressed him to this in the publick Court, assuring him, that if he would so plead, his Life should be safe; and that they had no Evidence which could prove him to be a *Priest*. And when the Old Man (Aged about seventy two years) would not be drawn to deny himself to be a *priest*; (taking it to be a denying of his Religion) and that the Court was compell'd to give Judgment against him; the Magistrate who gave the Sentence, was so drown'd in Tears upon that sad occasion; that it was long before he could pronounce the Sentence, which the Law compell'd (as he profess'd) to give. Now I ask, can it be presum'd that in those severe times against *popery*, those who then sate upon the Seat of Justice, would, or durst have proceeded thus in a publick Court, and made it their business so openly, so avowedly to have sav'd the Life of a *priest* of that party, if they had not well consider'd that the Makers of those Laws, and even *Cromwel*, who had then taken upon him the Government of these Nations, did not in Truth intend a rigid and severe Execution of those Laws, which were for Inflicting pains and penalties for matter of meer Religion?

But I think, I need give no further Instances for the proof of this my Opinion: Whosoever shall reflect upon the present Genius of our whole Nation, and consider in what detestation all men have the Execution of persecuting Laws for matters of meer Religion, how publickly Informers are Abhorr'd and Discountenanced, when they labour to persecute any upon any such Law, will easily see that the whole Nation in general is convin'd, that those Laws were never any of them made, with intention to have them rigidly Executed. I have been told, (and it seems to be grounded upon Reason) that it is a principle of our Laws, *That even an Act of Parliament, which is against the Law of God, or against Reason, is void in it self*; If this be true (as methinks it ought to be) I think we are very near the time; wherein all our present Laws of this Nature, by which any are subject to be in any measure persecuted for matters of meer Religion, will be

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Repealed by the general Voice of the whole Nation, and that when the particular persons, of which the great Body of this Nation is compos'd, shall have considered something more deliberately, than their passions have yet permitted all to do, that every Law of this Nature is against the Liberty and property of the Subjects of *England*; Unjust and Cruel, in punishing men for not proceding against their Consciences; Expresly against the very principles and Rules of the Gospel of Christ, and principles of that true Religion which every one of us pretends to own; Destructive to the Trade and Well-being of our Nation, by Oppressing and driving away the most Industrious Working Hands of our Nation, and Depopulating, and thereby Impoverishing our Country, which is capable of imploying three times the number of people which we now have: Contradictory to the Rule of Justice, grounded upon common Reason, as well as Religion, which requires, *That no man should do unto another, what he would not have done unto himself*, And consequently void in it self by the Rule of the Laws of our Country: There will not be found a Magistrate, nay, a common Subject in *England*, who will not as positively renounce the putting in execution, or being accessary to the executing of any Law of this Nature, as he will renounce the becoming guilty of those detestable Sins of Murder or Theft;

I am, Sir, your old true Friend, and humble Servant,

A. N.

Postscript

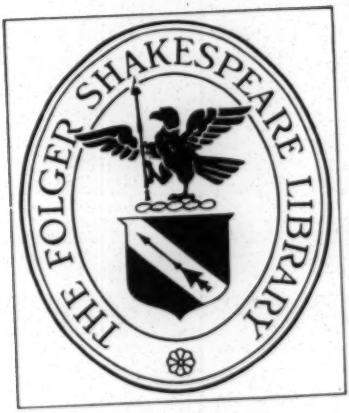
I *have here omitted many of those great Arguments, both which others have used, and which may yet be advanced from the Nature of this Subject, partly because there are so many* Discourses *extant, and partly because* English *mankind begins to be satisfied in the Matter Yet this give me leave to add in general, That Force upon Conscience, and Corporal Penalties about Matters of Religion, have not only no President or Example from Christ or his Apostles, but are expresly* against *both their* Precepts *and* Examples.

This Coercion is the old Disturber of States, the Destroyer of Property, the Depopulator of Kingdoms the Enemy of Humane Nature, of kind Neighbourhood, and of Conscientious Religion. *At best it either maketh men* Religious by Root, *which is* no Religion, *or* Conformable for Fear and Interest, *which is* Ir-religion *and base* Hypocrisie. *But besides all this, it corrupteth and distracteth the Nature of all* Civil Government, *by making the measure of* Loyalty, *not* Love, Honour *and* Obedience *to* Cæsar, *but* Conformity *to be Clergy and Religion in Fashion; which destroys the true Dependence*

and

and Obligation in Government, and subjects the Lives, Liberties and Estates of the People to the frequent Revolutions *of* Religion; *which ought to stand fixed and Sacred upon the common and undenyable Principles of Civil and Just Government.*

I Hope I shall be excus'd for this Conception, *since of all others.* This renders to *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsar's*: *And I would to God, all the* Cæsars *of the World saw the truth of this* Notion: *They would not then suffer themselves to be* grown upon, *not only by another Power then* Cæsar's *but by a Power* contrary *to* Cæsar's, *and which in the tendency of it leaves* Cæsar *nothing but* His Name. *Let Him be felt King of all His people, by His Goodness, as well as by His power.* Optimus *went before* Maximus *among* Infidels; *and shall pretenders to the best of* Religions (Christianity I *mean*) *decline it? All Creatures Nourish and Defend their Young: We are the* Children *of the Government, and should be comforted and Defended under the* Magistrates *Wing of Just power and Favour: He should Endeavour our Encrease, Encourage our Industry, and thereby Enrich and Replenish the Kingdom, not Impoverish & depopulate it. For* the *glory* of a prince is in the multitude of his people: *Not* Beggars, *but* Men of Industry. *But who dares to be Indistrious, that would not have his labors made the* Forfeit *of his* Sober Conscience? *UNHAPPY AGE!* Come! *'tis time for Humane Nature to remember from whence she came, for Mankind to* Love, *for* Cæsar to be kind to all his people; *To let his rain fall upon all, his Sun shine upon all, that he may justly render Himself Master of the* Affections *of all, and not serve* Factions *nor* Interest *nor imbroil his Government with the Opinionary Differences about* Religion, *which doth not* Enlarge, *but* Narrow *His Empire: And those that put him upon such Measures, let their Pretences be what it will, they are too narrow for his Glory, and do* Ill Offices *in the great Family of the Kingdom. They set the* Father against the Son, *and excite him to Disinherite his* Children, *and those* Virtuous too; *meerly for the sober exercise of a Discenting conscience, about matters relating to t'other World: This is* practising of Reprobation or opinion, and sacrificing Nature and Morality to Modes of Religion: *Nay, this is to* Engross Cæsar by a party, and to Monopolize Him from the rest of His people; *A sin against the very Nature and end of Government.* God *grant us all more Wisdom, more Honesty, and more Charity, and that we may yet live to see* all Industry encouraged, the poor employed, the Kingdom in Love with its own Growths, Virtue only rewarded, Vice only punished, that *Righteousness peace* and *plenty* may yet vouchsafe to dwell amongst us. So be it to Cæsar and his people, while the Sun and Moon endures.

FINIS.

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